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Secretary Weinberger's Annual Outburst Against Tobacco is a Sad and Unfair Spectacle

HON. JESSE A. HELMS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Friday, August 1, 1975

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at least once a year, it appears that HEW Secretary Caspar Weinberger feels obliged to go through the exercise of issuing a press release condemning tobacco, in which he releases the results of another highly debatable "study" that has been financed by the taxpayers.

This week, Secretary Weinberger did it again—with his latest annual call for Federal controls of tobacco. He did it last year; and when I contacted President Ford, the President promptly and sensibly assured me that Secretary Weinberger was speaking for Secretary Weinberger—and not for the Ford administration.

Now, Mr. President, I like Secretary Weinberger; but I do feel that he ought to restrain himself—at least until he has calmly examined the immense economic contribution that the tobacco industry makes to the stability of our Nation. Mr. Weinberger would also do well to take note of the fact that all these "studies" that throw him into a tizzy are highly debatable in their conclusions. It is all right with me if Secretary Weinberger has fixations about tobacco, but it would be far better if he tempered them with a bit more commonsense and objectivity, not to mention fairness.

Be that as it may, Mr. President, I desire to call to the attention of Senators a speech delivered in June by the Honorable Horace R. Kornegay, a distinguished former Member of the House of Representatives from North Carolina. Mr. Kornegay is now president and executive director of The Tobacco Institute, Inc. He addressed the 31st annual convention of the Bright Belt Warehouse Association, held at Wrightsville Beach, N.C., June 16-18.

I ask unanimous consent, Mr. President, that the fine address by Mr. Kornegay be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the address

was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

REMARKS OF HORACE R. KORNEGAY

You don't know how happy I am to be with you this evening. It's always a relief to get down to North Carolina...and get away from Washington, D.C. To get away from the antismoking zealots, their so-called experts who can always discover a new health hazard to blame on tobacco, and their political handmaidens who find it so easy to draft hostile legislation.

It's so nice to escape from the tempers and tensions that try men's souls, and talk with good friends who do not regard "tobacco" as a dirty word.

I feel like the fellow I ran into the other day in a supermarket. Just ahead of me in the checkout line was a young father with a shopping cart full of groceries and a screaming, yelling, bellowing two-year-old.

The young fellow kept repeating, over and over, slowly and softly, "Don't scream, Tommy; don't yell, Tommy; keep calm, Tommy."

I was frankly impressed by his effort to pacify the child. And I said to him: "You certainly are to be commended for trying so patiently to soothe the little Tommy."

"Mister," the young fellow replied wearily, "I'm Tommy."

As a son of North Carolina, and a soldier in what can properly be called "The Twenty-year War of Anti-Tobacco Aggression," I feel it is especially fitting to speak to you tonight here at the Blockade Runner Hotel.

For it is no exaggeration to say that our industry is under siege. We are sustaining a blockade by an enemy which is bound and determined to cut off the right of the American people who smoke tobacco in public places.

And it is also no exaggeration to say that we are just as bound and determined to break that blockade.

It's alarming to feel the hostility of our opponents toward all of us who grow, sell or manufacture tobacco. But that is nothing new. What is new, however, is the animosity they are now directing at any man or woman who happens to express the pursuit of happiness through the simple pleasure of smoking tobacco.

Many of our opponents are permissive about pot, pornography and hard liquor but are repressive about tobacco. Many of our opponents are silent about air pollution and industrial pollution but outspokenly condemn tobacco smoke as "personal pollution." Many of our opponents supports civil rights but deny smokers' rights.

It is a national scandal to see how easily some politicians are succumbing to the pres-

sure to relegate smokers to the back of planes, trains and buses, and to restrict their access to public places and employment. It seems incredible that many who advocated tearing down the old barriers that divided people on the basis of race, color or creed, are now willing to erect new barriers dividing people on the basis of whether they smoke or not.

The antismoking movement is growing uglier each day. But, then, the face of prohibition is never pretty.

Frustrated by their failure to convert the public to their cause, the antismoking activists are directing a campaign of violence and hostility to the 60 million Americans who choose to smoke. But, then, hell that no fury like a zealot scorned.

Aimed at any other segment of society, these excesses would be denounced in the harshest terms by politicians and the press. But then, taking cheap shots at tobacco has long been a popular pastime.

However, there are signs that the antismoking crusade may be an idea whose time has come—and gone. There are signs that it may have "peaked" as the politicians say, or "bottomed out" as the economists say.

For twenty years our antismoking opponents have had a virtual monopoly in the business of issuing dire warnings to the public. A recent cartoon expressed the situation very accurately. It depicted two white-coated scientists in a laboratory, each with a smirk on his face, and one saying, "Well what disease shall we blame on smoking this month?"

For two decades, it appeared that if a research worker wanted to get his name in the papers, all he needed to do was to come up with a scare study regarding smoking. The news media immediately picked it up and played it to the hilt.

But events have overtaken the antismoking crusade. They have lost their cozy monopoly of horror stories about tobacco. As Lincoln said, "You can't fool all of the people all of the time."

They get skeptical after twenty years. They start asking questions. Like a taxi cab driver recently, "Did you ever stop to think," he said, "if drinking kills people, and overeating kills people, and smoking kills people, what kills all those people who live right?"

Coal miners are getting tired of being told "It's cigarette-smoke-not-coal-dust" that's getting them sick. Asbestos workers are weary of hearing it's smoking that causes their illness. The same red herring arguments are no longer being bought by uranium miners or coke oven workers, or textile workers, or chemical or rubber workers.

People have eyes, and ears and brains. They can think for themselves and reach different

conclusions for those that the antismoking zealots try to impose on them by propaganda.

When a government report comes out showing that death and disease are high in an industrial county but low in a nearby suburban county without factories, people know it's not because of tobacco smoking. When another report comes out revealing high rates of death and disease around cities that draw their drinking water from polluted rivers, people know it's not because of tobacco smoking.

When people read about the massive pollution of the air caused by the emissions from millions of automobiles on our congested streets, they may tend to doubt the hysterical attacks on someone smoking in a restaurant.

One of the leaders of the medical profession recently summed up the situation. His assessment is worth repeating and remembering. "We must all be aware," he said, "that reports in both the scientific and popular media regarding other suspected causes have become more frequent rather than less frequent." As a result, he added, we "have become more as opposed to less aware of the claimed implications of occupational, environmental, hereditary, constitutional and even dietary factors." He cautioned the antismokers "to exercise total objectivity and in so doing, avoid being trapped by an over-simplification of issues beyond which the audience will hear but not heed."

I doubt they will heed the advice. I expect them to continue to throw millions of words and images at human beings who can process about 250 words a minute, or at most 1,000. They will continue to inundate the individual with an overload of information until he is finally desensitized. I think they have already accomplished this.

Any day now, an unbiased Gallup poll might reveal public opinion about the latest tobacco and health warning as 23 per cent undecided, 16 per cent don't know, and 61 per cent don't care.

Nor do I expect the antismoking movement to heed his advice about objectivity.

Too many of the old hands have a vested interest in attacking tobacco . . . and some newcomers are trying to get into the act.

One of the strangest attacks on tobacco recently came from furniture manufacturers. Instead of trying to develop less flammable upholstery, they suggest that the government force the tobacco industry to produce a self-extinguishing cigarette.

Most Congressmen and Senators see the folly of that solution. But Sen. Eagleton expressed his feeling with exactly the degree of ridicule the proposal deserves but unfortunately . . .

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tunately didn't get from the government. He suggested some ideas for producing a self-extinguishing cigarette. Namely:

Criminal penalties for anyone who smokes in bed, unless it is a water bed.

Make cigarettes out of non-burning materials instead of tobacco—sand, for instance.

An inverse airbag device operating on the principle that combustion cannot take place in the absence of oxygen. As soon as the cigarette is lit an airbag on the cigarette pack immediately sucks all the air out of the room, thus extinguishing the blaze and, unfortunately, the occupants of the room as well.

A device based on the notion that cigarette fires, like oil fires, can be extinguished through an explosion. Each cigarette is loaded with a small explosive charge which goes off when the ash reaches 3 inches from the end. The dental lobby would no doubt support this plan.

He tempered his humor with a serious note, with which I am sure we can all agree:

"Whatever the testers do come up with," Eagleton said, "I'm sure the government will persist in its efforts to help us poor, inept citizens live our lives the way we should, if only they show us the way."

Let me echo his serious note. Our opponents will not soon wither away. They will not admit that they have desensitized the public. Instead they will blame the public for being apathetic, stupid, misguided, unteachable and so on . . . and invoke the active intervention of Big Brother Government in accomplishing policies that lead to out-and-out prohibition.

The drive is already underway. Early this month at the so-called 3rd World Conference on Smoking and Health, some 500 anti-tobacco activists from nearly 50 nations convened in the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria in New York. Their purpose: to renew the flagging zeal of the anti-tobacco movement. Their goal: the end of smoking.

The leader of this anti-tobacco comintern was Sir George Godber, who used to be England's equivalent to the U.S. Surgeon General. You may be interested in some of Sir George's views about tobacco.

"Our target in the long term," he said, is "the elimination of cigarette smoking."

He foresaw the year 2000 as a time when "relatively few addicts use cigarettes, but only in private and in the company of consenting adults."

He called tobacco companies "the enemy" and "merchants of death."

He called tobacco advertising a "false message" which must be "suppressed."

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He called smoking, "a dirty, antisocial practice."

That was on the first day. On the final day Sir George announced between 150 and 200 recommendations for the delegates to take home and pressure their governments to adopt.

You will be interested in some that they will try to impose, not only on Americans but on the entire world. For example:

Take immediate steps to restrict smoking in all enclosed public places.

Ban the advertising and promotion of cigarettes throughout the world.

Make tobacco manufacturers and smokers pay for anti-smoking campaigns through 5 percent tax on cigarettes.

Make no smoking a condition for employment in hospitals and other health facilities.

Classify tobacco as addictive and smokers as drug-dependent.

Lower rates on all forms for insurance for nonsmokers.

Quit smoking clinics paid for by tax-supported national health insurance programs.

Raise tobacco prices or taxes or both to discourage smoking.

Discourage any investment of capital that might foster the tobacco industry.

Urge senior government officials from smoking in the exercise of duties.

That is the tip of the lance the anti-smokers have aimed at the jugular vein of not only our industry but our free society as well.

And the final irony is that you and I—and every other tax payer—contributed our share of hard-earned tax dollars to pay for this anti-tobacco, anti-social prohibitionist hate session.

Sad, but true. The entire sorry affair cost U.S. citizens more than a quarter of a million dollars. The money went from HEW to the American Cancer Society and thence largely into the expense accounts of about 150 foreign delegates to pay for air fares and \$50 a day living and food and beverage expenses . . . at the Waldorf Astoria.

All these scarce government funds to blend foreign zealotry with the domestic variety in a frantic effort to destroy the product that saved the Jamestown colony . . . that financed the war that freed us from the British empire . . . and without which there may have been no reason to have a Bicentennial, much less celebrate one.

I will end at this point, certain that if I have succeeded in bringing the kettle to a boil, I don't have to tell you where to pour the hot water of your indignation.

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